

872 Since 1946, public school students have had the option of taking French or English (*ibid.*, p. 426), and in Mansif English is the universal choice.

The national school follows more or less the same pattern, at the same and also more advanced levels, but of course the master is free to choose his own texts and to present his courses as he chooses. The one in Mansif is very much concerned with having up-to-date books (American and English), and holds his pupils and students up to strict hygienic standards. The school has a modern toilet, and the drinking water is filtered.

THE "SPORT CLUB"

675 The building which houses the government school is also the center of the
845 Sport Club which was founded by the young people of the village about 1950.

- [524] The building has a large central room in which there is a stage and four or five tables for playing cards and other games. There are four side-rooms, one of which has a shelf of books and pamphlets and is the headquarters of the club. The other three are schoolrooms, equipped with small wooden desks for the students and blackboards. The large room is used as an everyday meeting place for the adolescents and young adults. It is also used for the annual play. So far, it appears that though the club itself is new, it has focused already existing activities, such as the plays and volleyball games, but has not initiated any new kinds of activity. It is active as a unit only in the summer when there are many older students and young adults in the village on vacation, and if causes may be adduced, it can be said that the primary cause of the club's coming into existence is the need of idle vacationers to organize their activities. There was no need for this before the beginning of the recent changes in the culture.

VILLAGE GOVERNMENT

632 The village government consists of a mayor (*mukhtar*) and a four-man
623 council of elders (*'aḥlā' al-bayṭ*). All five men serve concurrently for a term of four years. They are elected by the men of the village who have attained the age of twenty-one. The present mayor (C,XXI) has held the office for about twelve years. The tenure of his predecessor (B,XII), who was his father-in-law, extended back to about 1900.

- [631] The present municipal statutes of Lebanon define three types of community. Beirut is in a class by itself. There follow one hundred and twenty "incorporated" towns. The remainder, about 1300, of which Mansif is one, are classed as "unincorporated" villages. The unincorporated villages are governed according to the *Loi des Mukhtars* of 1928 (Rimher, 1932, p. 1). Before 1928, the unincorporated villages were governed under the provisions of the Ottoman Vilayet Law of 1864 which, at the local level, was originally a formalization of the traditional pattern of government by a council of heads of households, one of whom was chosen as *shaykh*.

54 of a coffee house, the bulk of evening sociability takes place in private houses. There are several rather fixed groups of friends in the village who constantly interact with each other.

[521] These evening gatherings may involve mostly gossip or small talk, but more often conversation is in addition to games. In one circle the most popular game is bridge, played according to Calbertson rules. Some years ago someone returned from America with the book, "Before that we had our own rules." The play is fast and shrewd and also rather noisy. American technical terms such as "pass" and "no trump" are intermingled with Arabic numbers and suit-names. No money is ordinarily bet on these games. *Flaohle* is another popular card game, and there are many others.

Board-games are traditional in the area, and the most popular are backgammon (*jawd*) of which there are three versions, *Jaama* (essentially the same as checkers but with elaborations), and chess (*shibwa*) which seems to be played less than the others because the games are so slow.

Word-games are very popular also, and very frequently writing is an essential element in them. For example, someone will write a *diwan* or so letters in their unconnected form in a row. The others are then asked to make sense out of what appears to be meaningless. The principles involved in such games are optical tricks (e.g., the series of unconnected letters—somewhat analogous to a row of unconnected script letters in English), puns, and obscure grammatical technicalities.

Of more interest and, sometimes, more emotional involvement, are poetry games such as the one called *qafa*. In this, contestant A recites a stanza or so of Classical Arabic poetry. Contestant B must then respond with a stanza which begins with the same letter that the first one ended with. A must then recite lines which begin with the last letter of B's. And so it goes until one of the contestants either repeats something which has been given before or cannot think of anything. Impromptu verses, provided they scan and rhyme properly, are legitimate. The writer once heard this game played at a rapid rate of speed for half an hour without a break.

574 In these small gatherings of close friends the two sexes intermingle freely
562 and equally.

NIGHT LIFE IN THE CITY

[621] These villagers who live and work away from Mansif in the winter maintain very close contact with each other. For example, in Ras Beirut, the fast-growing western section of the city where the American University is located, there is a tight little group of six or seven nuclear families, all headed by young adults, who, it was said, visit together as a group almost nightly. Each takes its regular turn playing host to the others. One member said he thought that their separation from the village brought them closer together than they would be otherwise. The group is known as "little Mansif" to outside acquaintances, and it appears to have estab-